

Venezuela declares war on cults

by David Ramonet

On May 30, Venezuelan Attorney General Iván Dario Badell ordered an investigation into the activities of the Unification Church, better known as the Moon cult or the “Moonies,” after its founder, Korean Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Moon boasts of his close relationship with former U.S. President George Bush, who travels around the world on Moon’s wallet. In November 1996, for example, Bush toured several Ibero-American countries, taking advantage of a ticket purchased by Moon to inaugurate the cult leader’s new newspaper, *El Mundo*, in Buenos Aires. The tour also served to promote Bush on an international level, just when U.S. public opinion was becoming outraged over revelations that Bush had financed the Contras’ war in Nicaragua with cocaine from Colombia’s Medellín Cartel, which was converted into highly addictive “crack” and flooded into Los Angeles and other cities throughout the United States.

Prosecutor Badell took this measure, after both the archbishop of Caracas, Ignacio Velasco, and the bishop of Valencia from the state of Carabobo, Jorge Urosa, confirmed charges that had been made in late May by the Caracas tabloid *Así Es la Noticia*, regarding the aggressive recruitment campaign of the Moonies, especially in the plazas of Caracas and Valencia. That tabloid, in turn, was reproducing earlier coverage from the newspaper of the Caracas archdiocese, *La Religión*. The “Youth Forum” column of *La Religión* had published a devastating article, entitled “Moon Cult Threatens Venezuelan Youth.”

The Moon cult has been banned in several countries, including Germany, Australia, and Israel. In the United States, various of its members have been involved in legal cases related to drugs and weapons, and Moon himself has spent time in jail. But during the George Bush administration, Moon consolidated his propaganda network in the United States, and expanded it to South America, setting up a base of operations in Montevideo, Uruguay, where he founded the newspaper *Ultimas Noticias*.

The Moon doctrine can be described as a syncretic Gnostic ideology, which centers around a perverse interpretation of the Bible from the standpoint of a clinically psychopathic obsession with sex. For example, Moon maintains in his writings that “Jesus failed in his mission, because he never married to found the perfect family, for lack of time to have sexual relations with Mary Magdalene.” And, “When God created human beings, where did he invest his maximum creative

effort? In the sexual organ.”

Another cult with a similar belief structure, or “doctrine,” and which has also been in trouble with the law, is the so-called Universal Christian Gnostic Church, whose most prominent member in Venezuela is Congressman Walter Márquez. Márquez recently attempted, without success, to block the extradition of Colombian drug lord Justo Pastor Perafán. In response, Venezuelan Labor Party (PLV) Secretary General Alejandro Peña Esclusa denounced the Gnostic Church’s links with the drug trade and subversion. Peña also revealed various aspects of this “satanic cult which promotes perverse sexual rites,” to which Márquez belongs.

The Gnostic Church was founded a half-century ago by Colombian Samael Aun Weor, and promotes his sexual practices as if they were religious rites, in books such as *The Perfect Marriage*, *Secret Notes of a Guru*, *The Revolution of Beelzebub*, and *Treatise on Occult Medicine and Magic*. In these texts, Aun Weor argues such points as: “All religion has its sexual origin”; “the dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit and of the voluptuous Venus Aphrodite, is always represented as a phallic instrument used by the Holy Spirit to impregnate the Virgin Mary”; “the energies of the Holy Spirit descend into the sexual organs”; and so on.

In Venezuela, the Gnostic Church was founded by the Colombian Julio César Medina Vizcaino (who has been accused in Colombia of rape), with the legal advice of Márquez.

The plague spreads

Although cults have been involved in the social fabric of Ibero-America for some time, sources linked to the Venezuelan bishops council report that they have been proliferating in Venezuela in the past year, specifically since President Rafael Caldera put the country under the economic dictatorship of the International Monetary Fund and Anglo-Dutch financial oligarchy.

As a result, this proliferation of religious cults has affected social and cultural cohesion in the country, creating virtual “tribes”—as the British have done in Africa—which block national unity at a time when it is most needed. It is not for nothing that the Anglophile elements of the U.S. oligarchy have been proposing, since the time of Teddy Roosevelt, to do away with Catholicism in Ibero-America. The result is that now various cults, basing themselves on perverse sexual rituals, are surfacing, with the intent of further destroying the morality of the citizenry.

The action initiated by the Attorney General is specifically intended to investigate the Moonies’ recruitment of youth, who, according to reports received by Father Urosa, are forced to abandon their families and break all ties to their normal activities. These youth are then forced to recruit others, and to collect funds for their activities.

The legal spokesman for the Moonies in Venezuela, Argentine Gustavo Giuliano, has denied all these accusations in statements given to the tabloid *Así Es la Noticia*, even while



Venezuelan Labor Party Secretary General Alejandro Peña Esclusa, a co-thinker of Lyndon LaRouche, has taken the point in exposing the ties of the “Gnostic Church” of Congressman Walter Márquez, and other cults, to the drug trade and narco-terrorism.

boasting of Moon’s close ties to George Bush. But, in a radio debate with María Gabriela Castellano, representative of the Catholic Church youth mission, Giuliano had no answer when she read the pornographic quotes of Moon. The radio show host, who had Moon’s book in front of him, was stunned by the Argentine’s brazenness.

Gnostics expose themselves

On May 7, the PLV’s Peña Esclusa gave a press conference in which, with a wealth of detail and the books of Aun Weor on display, he presented the history of the Gnostic Church and of its belief structures. His information was given broad coverage in the media, both in Caracas and throughout the country. At that same moment, Congressman Márquez was out trying to get drug lord Perafán charged with some minor infraction by Venezuelan authorities, as a way of blocking his extradition to the United States. This maneuver was also exposed by Interior Minister José Guillermo Andueza.

La Religión later reported that “the Venezuelan Labor Party’s secretary general [Alejandro Peña Esclusa] thinks that behind the obstacles presented by Walter Márquez to the extradition of the alleged drug trafficker to the United States, could be the influence of former [Venezuelan] President Carlos Andrés Pérez.” Márquez did not respond to these accusations, but two weeks later, Rafael Poleo, the editor of the newspaper *El Nuevo País*, wrote in his May 22 column that “Carlos Andrés Pérez’s candidate for governor of Táchira, is named Walter Márquez.”

The Venezuelan Gnostics responded through two of their fronts which are alleged to be rival organizations, each claiming to be the authentic representative of the “Gnostic truth.” The director of the Samael Aun Weor Universal Christian Gnostic Church in Venezuela, Juan Capasso Pinto, published an advertisement in the newspaper *El Universal*, and gave

statements to the newspaper *Últimas Noticias*, in which he denied that Márquez was a bishop of his cult, but admitted that he has been “our adviser and sympathizer.” Capasso denied that his members worship the devil, and insisted that they are “faithful interpreters of Christ’s teachings.” Given Aun Weor’s utterings, this statement lacks credibility.

At the same time, lawyer Miriam Quiroz Rodríguez, president of the Universal Christian Gnostic Movement, admitted that Gnostics “have always studied sex with respect, as the source of life, as that extraordinary energy capable of creating and re-creating and which, obviously, is the only one that can radically transform us through its wise use.” She further states that “no one can say . . . that they have come from a theory, a concept, or by correspondence, but only from sex.”

Another aspect of the accusations which has seriously affected the Gnostic leaders was Peña’s charge that its members are linked to the narco-guerrillas operating along the Colombian-Venezuelan border. Peña specifically stressed the role Márquez had played in the early years of the Pérez government (1989-93), in dismantling the counterinsurgency military unit known as the José Antonio Páez Specific Command (CEJAP), made up of both military and state security forces. As the result of the dismantling of CEJAP, kidnappings, assassinations, and attacks by narco-terrorists on Venezuelan territory have greatly multiplied.

According to high-level sources, the majority of the Gnostic Church’s members in the border state of Táchira are concentrated in the town of La Victoria, bordering the Colombian town of Arauquita. Military intelligence has identified La Victoria as the base of operations of Colombia’s narco-terrorists in Venezuela, while the mayor of Arauquita is a member of the Patriotic Union, the electoral arm of the Colombian Communist Party which fronts for the narco-terrorist FARC.